

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-101 have been examined.

Examiner's Amendment

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Ross Robinson on February 9, 2009.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the first line of claim 1, "A method of facilitating a project bid process" is hereby amended to read, "A computer-implemented method of facilitating a project bid process". In the third line of claim 1, "generating a buyer-associated bid request;" is hereby amended to read, "generating a buyer-associated bid request by a server computer;". In the fifth line of claim 1, "transmitting the buyer-associated bid request" is hereby amended to read, "transmitting the buyer-associated bid request from the server computer".

In the first line of claim 61, "A method of managing a project bid process," is hereby amended to read, "A computer-implemented method of managing a project bid

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process,”. In the fourteenth line of claim 61, “updating the supplier bid response” is hereby amended to read, “updating, by a computer, the supplier bid response”.

Claim 82 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“The computer readable medium of claim 80, wherein the computer-executable instructions, when executed, further cause the processor to receive a buyer voucher approval.”

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-20, 97, and 100 are allowed.

Claims 41-60 and 99 are allowed.

The following is an examiner’s statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art of record, Almstead et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0210490), discloses a method of facilitating a project bid process, the method comprising: generating a buyer-associated bid request (Abstract; paragraph 33); transmitting the buyer-associated bid request to at least one supplier for solicitation of a supplier bid response (ibid.); generating a supplier-associated bid request (Abstract; paragraphs 33-35, 71, 74-77, and 80-81); and transmitting the supplier-associated bid request to at least one subcontracting entity for solicitation of a subcontracting-entity bid response to be generated with the bid item selections utilized in the supplier-associated bid request (Abstract; paragraphs 33-35, 71, 74-77, and 80-81). Almstead discloses receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response (paragraphs 40-43), but neither Almstead nor any

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other prior art of record discloses updating the supplier bid response with the selected at least a portion of the bid response data included in the subcontracting-entity bid response. It is known to update information in general based on receiving new communications, but claim 1 recites transmitting the supplier bid response and further receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response. Almstead discloses receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response and on that basis completing the supplier (e.g., general contractor) bid response, so there is no updating the supplier bid response after receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response. Thus, Almstead teaches away from incorporating the final limitations of claim 1.

The above statement was written with particular reference to claim 1; claim 41 recites a computer-readable medium with computer-executable instructions for causing a processor to carry out the method of claim 1, so claim 41 and its dependent claims are allowable for the reasons set forth with regard to claim 1 and its dependents.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Claims 21-40 and 98 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art of record, Almstead et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0210490), discloses a computer system for facilitating a bid process for a project involving a buyer,

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a supplier, and at least one subcontracting entity, the computer system comprising: a database system (Figures 1 and 2; paragraphs 22-24); and a server connected to the database system and connected to the buyer, the supplier, and at least one subcontracting entity (Figures 1, 2, 4, and 5; paragraphs 22-24, 31, and 38), wherein the server is operable to generate a buyer-associated bid request (Abstract; paragraph 33); transmit the buyer-associated bid request to the supplier (ibid.); generate a supplier-associated bid request via parsing of the buyer-associated bid request (Abstract; paragraphs 33-35, 71, 73-77, and 80-81, as well as 95-96); transmit the supplier-associated bid request to the at least one subcontracting entity (Abstract; paragraphs 33-35, 71, 73-77, and 80-81, as well as 95-96); receive a subcontracting entity bid response to the supplier-associated bid request (paragraphs 40-43); and receive a supplier bid response, the supplier bid response incorporating, at least in part, data from the subcontracting entity bid response (paragraphs 8, 9, and 74). Almstead discloses receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response (paragraphs 40-43), but neither Almstead nor any other prior art of record discloses updating the supplier bid response with the selected at least a portion of the bid response data included in the subcontracting-entity bid response. It is known to update information in general based on receiving new communications, but claim 21 recites transmitting the supplier bid response and further receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response. Almstead discloses receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response and on that basis completing the supplier (e.g., general contractor) bid response, so there is no updating the supplier

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bid response after receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response. Thus, Almstead teaches away from incorporating the final limitations of claim 21.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Claims 61-72 and 101 are allowed.

Claims 73-84 are allowed.

Claims 85-96 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The closest prior art of record, Almstead et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2004/0210490), discloses a method of facilitating a project bid process, the method comprising: transmitting a buyer-associated bid request to a supplier (Abstract; paragraph 33); transmitting, to a subcontracting entity, of a daisy chain quotation associated with the buyer bid request (Abstract; paragraphs 33-35, 71, 74-77, and 80-81); receiving a completed daisy chain quotation from the subcontracting entity, the completed daisy chain quotation comprising completed applicable daisy chain quotation items of the daisy chain quotation transmitted to the subcontracting entity (paragraphs 40-43); updating a supplier bid response to the buyer-associated bid request using at least some of the completed applicable daisy chain quotation items, and transmitting the updated supplier bid response to the buyer (paragraphs 40-43). Almstead does not

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expressly disclose receiving an enablement request relative to a subcontracting entity, and receiving an affiliation request relative to a primary supplier, the affiliation request requesting that the subcontracting entity be affiliated with the primary supplier, but Cornelius (U.S. Patent Application Publication 2003/010112) teaches users, including subcontractors, submitting enablement and affiliation requests, which are received, registering the subcontractors and other users (paragraphs 30-33). Almstead discloses subcontracting entities affiliated with primary suppliers, to receive appropriate bid requests (Figure 4 and 5; paragraphs 31-35 and 40-43). However, neither Almstead, Cornelius, nor any other prior art of record discloses updating the supplier bid response, and transmitting the updated supplier bid response to the buyer, after transmitting the supplier bid response. Almstead discloses receiving the subcontracting-entity bid response and on that basis completing the supplier (e.g., general contractor) bid response, so there is no updating the supplier bid response after receiving a completed daisy chain quotation. Thus, Almstead teaches away from the combination of limitations of claim 61.

The above statement was written with particular reference to claim 61; claim 73 recites a computer-readable medium with computer-executable instructions for causing a processor to carry out the method of claim 61, so claim 73 and its dependent claims are allowable for the reasons set forth with regard to claim 61 and its dependents. Claim 85 recites a computer system carrying out the method of claim 61, so claim 85 and its dependent claims are allowable for the reasons set forth with regard to claim 61 and its dependents.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Khalidi (U.S. Patent 7,430,523) discloses an automated competitive bidding system and process.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Nicholas D. Rosen, whose telephone number is 571-272-6762. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM, M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith, can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300. Non-official/draft communications can be faxed to the examiner at 571-273-6762.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

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Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Nicholas D. Rosen/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 3625
February 9, 2009